TEXAS ARCHITECT

OFFICIAL PUBLICATION OF THE TEXAS SOCIETY OF ARCHITECTS

TEXAS ARCHITECTS AT NATIONAL CONVENTION

THE ATOM BOMB TESTS AND HOME PLANNING

ARCHITECTS TO HELP REBUILD WACO

PICTURES OF HOUSTON WORKSHOP

JUNE
1953

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INSIDE THE TEXAS ARCHITECT

THE TEXAS ARCHITECT

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CALENDAR OF EVENTS

June 15-19—84th annual convention, AIA, at Seattle, Wash.

July 18—Quarterly meeting, board of directors, TSA; 10 a.m., Commodore Perry Hotel, Austin.

November 4-6—14th annual convention, TSA, at Austin.

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WACO!

The tragedy of Waco still rests heavy upon Texas. More than a hundred lives lost within a few short minutes, millions of dollars in property damage. More millions gone because of businesses lost or suspended.

There are at least two lessons that should be gained from this tragedy. First, the damage to Waco is small compared to that of an atomic attack, and second, buildings should be built better and thus prevent total collapse from ravages of nature or from man's wanton attack.

There is little we as individual citizens can do to keep an enemy nation from dropping an atom bomb on our cities. We can be prepared however through proper organization to save all the lives we can and localize and minimize the damage from fires and other after effects of such depredations. Our Civil Defense program is worth while and should receive the full cooperation of every thinking citizen of Texas.

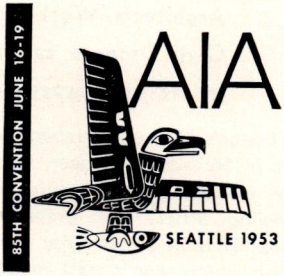
There is much that the individual citizen can do about better buildings. The tragedy in Waco might have been very small had all buildings in the disaster area been of modern construction built to withstand high winds and with pressure relief panels. It is not suggested that all property damage or all loss of life would have been averted, but if the Dennis Furniture building had not collapsed obviously many lives would have been saved.

An individual who erects a building and his *architect* who designs it do have a grave responsibility to the community. Adequate design and proper construction will save lives and at the same time reduce the damage to the building in time of emergency. The Architects of Texas as they help to rebuild Waco will study this tragedy to learn how a repetition may be avoided. It is hoped our city governing bodies and our citizens will see that existing sub-standard buildings are made safe or demolished. It is hoped also that those who build will be willing to build better to be safer.

Waco's loss must not have been in vain. Let us determine and learn all the lessons that are to be found there.

Large Texas Delegation Heads For Seattle Convention

Houston Group Of 12 Included In Those To Attend Sessions Opening June 15 On Coast



More than 30 members of the Texas Society of Architects have made reservations to attend the 85th convention of the American Institute of Architects which opens June 15 in Seattle, Wash., and continues through June 19.

Maurice J. Sullivan of Houston, national treasurer of the AIA; Albert S. Golemon of Houston, TSA president; Edward L. Wilson of Fort Worth, AIA regional director; and David C. Baer of Houston, chairman of the committee on accounting and office practice of the national group, will leave early to arrive in Seattle for pre-convention sessions beginning June 13.

Dean Of MIT Keynote Speaker

Pietro Belluschi, dean of the School of Architecture and Planning at Massachusetts Institute of Technology, and William M. Allen, president of Boeing Airplane Company, will be the two keynote speakers at the convention.

The theme of the convention is "A New Country — A New Architecture," specifically the contribution of the Pacific Northwest to contemporary American building. Seattle resident Allen will open the business sessions Tuesday, speaking on the first part of the theme, "A New Country." Belluschi's subject, "A New Architecture," will close the week's program on Friday.

At the annual Banquet on Thursday, June 18, George H. T. Kimble, geographer, meteorologist and, since 1950, director of the American Geographical Society, will relate architecture to the broader study of environment.

Throughout the convention, daily seminars will also present a variety of subjects appropriate to the convention theme.

Harwell H. Harris To Speak

William Wilson Wurster, noted west coast architect and dean of the University of California's College of Architecture, will moderate a seminar on "Oriental Influences on American Art and Architecture." Other noted members of this panel include Antonin Raymond, architect for the new Reader's Digest Building in Tokyo, Japan, and Harwell Hamilton Harris, member TSA and Dean of the School of Architecture at the University of Texas. Both Harris, who formerly practiced in California and Raymond, who has won his major fame for work in the Far East, have been strongly influenced by Asian architecture.

Meeting On Home Building

A special business meeting on the Home Building Industry will feature well known California builder Joseph Eichler and Los Angeles architect Edward Fickett as speakers, with Morgan Yost, FAIA of Chicago as the Committee Chairman.

Richard M. Bennett, of the Chicago firm of Loebl, Schlossman and Bennett, will act as moderator for a "Liturgical Arts" seminar, which will include on its panel representatives of the Protestant, Catholic and Jewish faiths.

Will The Atom Bomb Change Home Planning?

Architects Work With Civil Defense Experts In Nevada Experiments

(Editor's Note: The recent atom bomb tests in Nevada have been watched with keen interest by the entire world. The following article was prepared by the Texas Division of Defense and Disaster Relief, which sent a staff member to Las Vegas to observe the effect of atom bombs on typical American homes built for the tests.)

Architects are already asking "How is the atom bomb going to change home planning?"

Civil Defense experts, including William L. McGill, Texas coordinator of civil defense, believe they already have at least a partial answer. The latest addition to their reasoning is based on the atomic tests held in Nevada recently in which two "typical" American homes were used.

You may remember the big part that architects played in those tests from the beginning.

Architects Called In

Atomic Energy Commission and civil defense officials, wanting to know what effect an A-bomb would have on American types of structures, called architects in to decide what kind of construction would come closest to the average home being built in this country. At the same time, they also wanted a house which would give them the most with which to test.

The architects decided that the best bet would be a two-story frame house with a basement. As might be expected, the first floor was made up mainly of the ilving room, dining room and kitchen, while the second floor was devoted mostly to bedrooms.

Two of these houses were finally built, one 3,500 feet from the center of the explosion, and the other 7,500 feet away. Wiring and plumbing were left out. But in every other respect—even down to much of the furniture which would normally be needed — the two houses were very similar to models which would cost between $15,000 and $20,000 each.

For test purposes, air raid shelters were also constructed in the basement areas. One type was a lean-to variety which can be built for as little as $40 by an amateur handyman. Others built for the test would cost several hundred dollars to build.

Accurate Picture Of Damage

Just a few hours after the bomb was exploded on March 17, experts had for the first time in history a fairly accurate picture of what to expect in case an atomic bomb ever drops in an American neighborhood — always remembering, of course, that surrounding buildings could catch some shock waves and thus reduce damage. Even so, it was definitely verified that if an American house is close enough to where an A-bomb drops, it can be destroyed just as readily as a flimsy Japanese house can.

The house only 3,500 feet away from the center of the explosion was a complete shambles, just as the experts had predicted. In its basement, however, the air raid shelters—particularly the $40 one—came through fairly well.

The house located 7,500 feet away was still standing at the end of the test. However, its main timbers were all either broken or badly cracked. As for the basement air raid shelters, there was absolutely no damage to them.

(Continued on Page 12)

Central Texas Architects To Help Rebuild Waco After Great Tornado

Architects of Central Texas will work with the Waco Voluntary Rebuilding Committee to rebuild two devastated blocks in the city, hit by a death-dealing tornado which took at least 113 lives and smashed property worth an estimated $50,000,000, on May 11.

TSA members met with the nucleus group of the rebuilding committee while bulldozers were still clearing away first storm debris, and architects will have a key part in turning two completely demolished blocks into areas of real architectural beauty, if present plans can be developed.

Architects of the Waco and Central Texas area were working at the disaster site soon after the tornado had subsided, helping to determine which of dozens of damaged buildings had to be subsequently dynamited and carried away as rubble. Later, architects worked in preparing the first draft of an ambitious rebuilding program.

The Texas Architect will carry special articles as this rebuilding program develops and Waco builds anew from the ruins of one of the nation's most disastrous storms.

University Of Houston Students At Work On City Planning Project

Architectural students at the University of Houston, under the direction of Richard W. Lilliot, Jr., head of the University's Department of Architecture, are preparing various specialized maps of the city of Galveston in connection with a project in advanced city planning.

Areas under study include histo.ical research, future expansion of recreational facilities, land development, traffic, land use, and port use.

Architects at Houston Workshop on Public Relations

At Houston, David C. Baer, chairman of the TSA committee on public relations, speaks before the opening session of a day-long Public Relations Workshop held May 16 at the Shamrock Hotel. Emphasis at the Houston meeting was on increasing the individual architect's participation in community activities. Attending the Workshop were TSA officials and chairmen of the public relations committees of the TSA chapters.

NEW MASTIC FOR RUBBER TILE

A new mastic known as Kem-Set is typical of products uncovered by architects in their continuing search for materials which allow more economical and better construction. Kem-Set, it is claimed, makes possible the use of rubber and plastic tile in places where it had been impractical with existing adhesives.

Kem-Set is not the product of any one manufacturer of rubber or plastic tile. It is obtainable through all the manufacturers and can be used in connection with any good tile.

Former Mastic Problems

It had been considered impractical, for instance, to use rubber or plastic tile on a slab foundation in direct contact with the ground. The reason for this was rather simple. Concrete is very porous and moisture from the ground is drawn, by capillary attraction, to the top surface of the slab. This moisture becomes an alkaline solution as it passes through the slab. The solution emulsifies the regular waterproof mastics so that they lose their adhesive qualities, and the tile loosens and comes up from the floor.

The usual method of attempting to correct this situation is to membrane the slab, or try to seal the surface.

Of these two methods, the membrane is the most practical, but even this is not 100% positive, since a pin hole in the membrane will permit moisture to enter the slab.

(Continued on Page 11)

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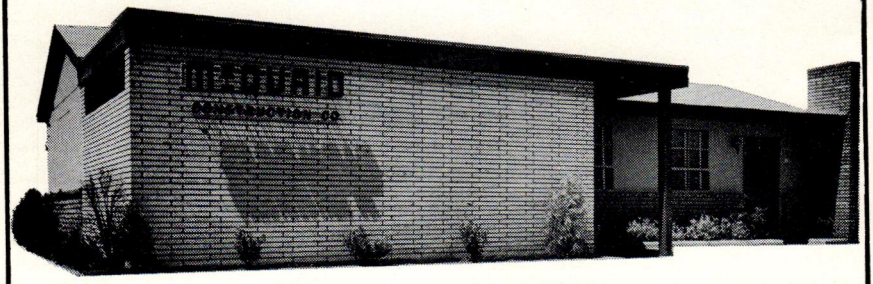

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Moisture-Proof Product Developed For Rubber Tile Installation On Concrete Slab Foundation

(Continued from Page 9)

Tile manufacturers, together with makers of adhesives, attempted to find a mastic which would not emulsify and would hold, regardless of the moisture condition. Kem-Set was developed and was given continued tests in the laboratory. These tests proved that the new mastic did not emulsify and that it would secure tile to a concrete slab permanently.

Realizing that a laboratory test is not always proof positive, it became necessary to make a practical installation on a floor which was known to be "wet," one on which a regular installation had failed.

Such a condition was found in an area which was so damp that water actually laid in puddles under the tile.

This floor was laid with 1/8" tile, using Kem-Set as the adhesive. Particular attention was paid to getting a good even distribution of the mastic and to sliding each tile carefully into place.

Tight, Clean Installation

This first floor has now been down for about two years. Each tile is said to be just as tight and secure to the concrete as the day it was installed. In every case the tile has firmly adherred to the floor despite the fact that there was moisture under it. There is no odor. It is a good clean installation.

With the success of this first installation, others were tried, and today, better than a million square feet of rubber tile have been laid with Kem-Set, without any reported failures.

The development of Kem-Set apparently opens the way for the use of rubber tile in many other areas heretofore considered impractical, included radiant-heated floors and commercial buildings using "Q" construction and light aggregate floors.

With Our Advertisers

Vina-Lux, a new vinyl-asbestos flooring by Uvalde Rock Asphalt Company, is now being produced in eighteen colors and fives sizes. This reinforced vinyl tile never needs waxing.

The Slide-View Steel Door & Window Company is now using a 20-inch-high model to demonstrate their Slide-View sliding glass doors right in an architect's office.

Air Devices, Inc., New York City, is now making two new Agitair Stripline continuous air diffusers with built-in diffusing vanes which produce high turbulence, aspiration, and rapid temperature equalization.

Louis P. Fox of Dallas has been named special representative for Texas Quarries, Inc. Mr. Fox will act as contact man between Texas Quarries and architects and will also give factory assistance to contractors at the job site.

PROFESSIONAL DIRECTORY

Atom Bomb . . .

(Continued from Page 7)

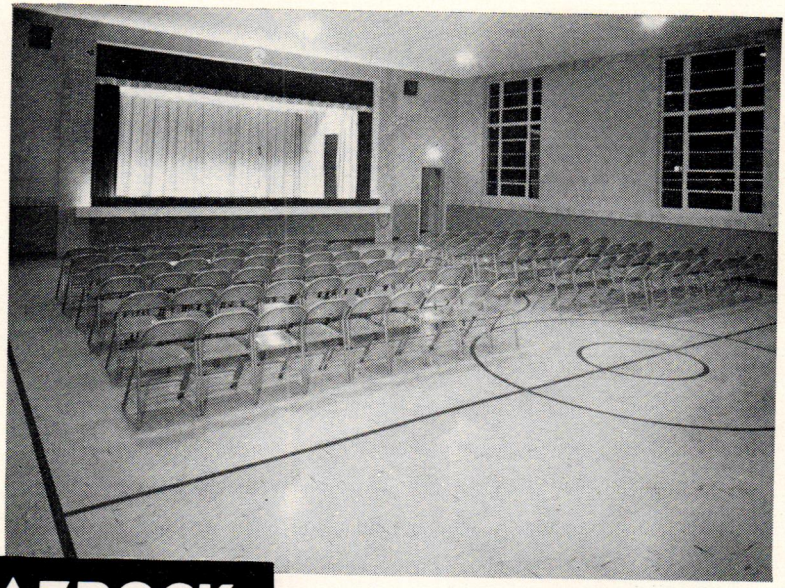
Heavier Nailing Pattern Helps

Now, then: Where does this leave Texas architects?

A few hours after the test, Dr. Robert L. Corsbie, a test director, flew in to inspect the wreckage of the second house. He pointed out that a heavier nailing pattern in the architectural plans might have meant much less damage to the house.

As for the first house, it was obvious that no architectural designs could have helped it. Being as close as it was, it was doomed to destruction.

Dr. Corsbie and other officials, working with architects, also found out many other facts which will permit the architectural profession to understand more of the mysterious effects of atom bombs, shock waves, and other results of nuclear explosions. One important fact, the amount of protection afforded by basements, has already started Texas architects upon a study of possible means of providing similar protection, without the provision of full basements, in an area where this feature is seldom included in home construction.



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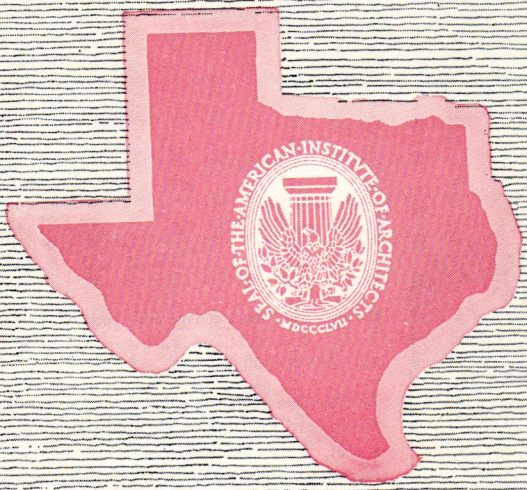

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